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Books and Films
*Planet Earth* by Rosalie Bertell
Militarized Economy Weakens Ability to Adapt to Warming and other Crises

**CONSEQUENCES TO HUMANS**

This account of WWI from the point of view of the mainly British warrior advocates and their opponents of the war is simultaneously a depiction of how war mainly negatively affects all. A powerful anti-war account of the slaughter of one war.

**What Every Person Should Know About War by Chris Hedges**
Acclaimed *New York Times* journalist and author Chris Hedges offers a critical -- and fascinating -- lesson in the dangerous realities of our age: a stark look at the effects of war on combatants. Utterly lacking in rhetoric or dogma, this manual relies instead on bare fact, frank description, and a spare question-and-answer format. Hedges allows U.S. military documentation...more

Acclaimed *New York Times* journalist and author Chris Hedges offers a critical -- and fascinating -- lesson in the dangerous realities of our age: a stark look at the effects of war on combatants. Utterly lacking in rhetoric or dogma, this manual relies instead on bare fact, frank description, and a spare question-and-answer format. Hedges allows U.S. military documentation of the brutalizing physical and psychological consequences of combat to speak for itself.

Hedges poses dozens of questions that young soldiers might ask about combat, and then answers them by quoting from medical and psychological studies.

• What are my chances of being wounded or killed if we go to war?
• What does it feel like to get shot?
• What do artillery shells do to you?
• What is the most painful way to get wounded?
• Will I be afraid?
• What could happen to me in a nuclear attack?
• What does it feel like to kill someone?
• Can I withstand torture?
• What are the long-term consequences of combat stress?
• What will happen to my body after I die?

This profound and devastating portrayal of the horrors to which we subject our armed forces stands as a ringing indictment of the glorification of war and the concealment of its barbarity.
--- On Mon, 12/12/11, Displaced Films <adam@sirnosir.com> wrote:

From: Displaced Films <adam@sirnosir.com>
Subject: Urgent! PBS broadcast of This is Where We Take Our Stand
To: humjeff@yahoo.com
Date: Monday, December 12, 2011, 12:16 PM

Dear Friends,

I have good news and bad news.

The good news is that This is Where We Take Our Stand, the film about the Iraq Veterans Against the War Winter Soldier/Iraq & Afghanistan Investigation, has now been distributed to every PBS station in the country for broadcast in January and February. Funded by the Independent Television Service (ITVS) and distributed by the National Educational Television Association (NETA), the film finally has the chance to be seen by people all across the country.

The bad news is that every individual PBS station can choose whether or not they will air the film. And in today’s political climate, we know that many, even most stations will not want to touch this compelling, vital film about the reality of America’s wars in the Middle East. We need your help to convince them that they must show this film.

THIS IS AN URGENT SITUATION. Over the next two weeks, PBS stations will be setting their programming for January. Call and email your local station and urge them to broadcast This is Where We Take Our Stand and allow these veterans' voices to be heard.

Also, please forward this email to your list and to everyone you know.

As we wrote in a letter to PBS programmers,
These aren't political or theoretical arguments, but the eyewitness accounts of men and women who thought they were fighting for their country and learned that, as Jason Washburn, a Marine veteran with three tours in Iraq put it, "We were on the bully's team, and that's not what I signed up for." It is a wrenching, painful, and necessary story.

This film reminds us that nothing is over. And it asks us to question what has changed. Certainly not the war in Afghanistan, which has expanded in the past three years, and not the killing and misery in Iraq, unleashed by 8 years of military occupation.

This is Where We Take Our Stand is the story of hundreds of Iraq War veterans who risked everything to publicly tell their stories of killings of civilians, torture, and the widespread degradation and destruction of Iraq that was brought on by the policies of their government. And it is a story that needs to be told especially today. These brave soldiers and veterans are challenging a complacency that runs very deep underscoring a willingness to accept unspeakable horrors committed in our name—as long as we don’t know about them.

Go to http://www.thisiswherewetakeourstand.com to watch episodes of the web series that the film is based on, and http://ivaw.org for information about Winter Soldier.

Thank you for your help. In the coming weeks we will send out announcements of where and when This is Where We Take Our Stand will be broadcast.

David Zeiger and Bestor Cram
Co-Producers
US Army Private Lavena Johnson was a former violin-playing honor student. In 2005, while stationed at Joint Base Balad in Iraq, she proudly told her family the US military was doing good things. Yet at 19, claims the Department of Defense, Lavena put the barrel of her M16 in her mouth and ended a bright life. The military says she was distraught over break-up emails from a new boyfriend of two months who lived in Kentucky. US Army Spc. Morganne McBeth was a medic for the 82nd Airborne who lived to jump out of C-130 Hercules aircraft. But after the 19-year-old also mysteriously died in Iraq during the summer of 2010, the military initially told her family "she stabbed herself".

To put it mildly, the military's official version of their deaths, doesn't quite cut it on the believability scale, says US Army veteran Susan Avila-Smith, director of the Military Sexual Trauma advocacy group VETWOW (Veteran Woman Organizing Women). Avila-Smith is an expert on sexual assault and in the post 9/11 landscape, Military Sexual Trauma or MST is increasing, especially on bases in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Sadly, there are 18 patriotic families or more like the Johnsons and McBeths who are seeking clear answers about their daughters' "non-combat related deaths", this according to US Army Ret. Col. Ann Wright. Families who say the US military has turned a cold shoulder to their need for closure. A US military that has discouraged them from uncovering the truth. A military that in some cases has secretly and callously taken the body parts of daughters, such as brains and hearts. A military that has never been more dependent on women warriors, but not doing enough to end sexual assaults and other harassment.

Susan Avila-Smith implores the US military, "Just tell the truth."

“Army Ranger Widow Confronts Rumsfeld Over Lies That Killed Her Husband,” Amy Goodman, Democracy Now, August 30, 2011, NationofChange. : “Amy Goodman speaks with the widow of a U.S. Army Ranger who confronted former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld about her husband’s suicide on Saturday. Ashley Joppa-Hagemann introduced herself to Rumsfeld during a book-signing by handing him a copy of her husband’s funeral program at a base south of Tacoma, Washington. She says Rumsfeld inspired her husband to join the Army after 9/11, but he later became disillusioned with the reasons for the war. Her husband, 25-year-old Staff Sergeant Jared Hagemann, killed himself ahead of what his wife says was his eighth deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan.
Moving from a War Economy to a Peace Economy

By davidswanson - Posted on 22 October 2011

By Mary Beth Sullivan, for mic50.org

It is my intention to stimulate some conversation about economic conversion – that is, planning, designing and implementing a transformation from a war economy to a peace economy. Historically, this is an effort that would include a changeover from military to civilian work in industrial facilities, in laboratories, and at US military bases.

To that end, I intend to bring to you all what I’ve learned from reading Seymour Melman, the most prolific writer on the topic.

Seymour Melman was a professor emeritus of Industrial Engineering at Columbia University. He joined the Columbia faculty in 1949, and by all reports, was a popular instructor until he retired from teaching in 2003.

Melman was also an active member of the peace movement. He was the co–chair of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), and the creator and chair of the National Commission for Economic Conversion and Disarmament. It is reported that Melman was under surveillance by the FBI for much of his career because of his work criticizing the military–industrial complex – a sure sign that there must be something worth hearing in his work. What did he say that the power structure feared?

The economic conversion movement in past decades played a valuable role in bringing together the peace movement and union leadership to do the heady work of imaging how this country could sustain industrial jobs when, as it was envisioned, the U.S. would stop production of the weapons of the Cold War. It is a history that should not be forgotten.

Melman noted that US industry had historically followed an established set of market rules: industry created products consumers needed, sold those products, made a profit, and turned those profits into improving production by upgrading the tools for more efficient production.
Military production for World War II began to change these rules of industry, which were then institutionalized in the 1960’s when Robert McNamara was Secretary of Defense. McNamara, who came to the Pentagon having been an executive at Ford Motor Company, implemented some critical changes.

Within the Pentagon, civilian and uniformed Pentagon officials were in conflict about the procedures for how to determine the costs of weapons to be contracted for manufacturing. On the one side, led by an industrial engineer, the idea was to base costs on the formulation of alternative designs and production methods, etc. – a competitive approach that promoted economy.

The other side proposed generating costs based on what was previously spent. For the Pentagon, this meant following the “cost–plus” system used during World War II, also known as “cost maximizing.”

As Melman put it, “…contractors could take the previous cost of making a product for the Pentagon and simply add on an agreed–upon profit margin. The more a product cost, the more [a contractor] stood to earn.”

McNamara opted for this second option. The result was that by 1980, the cost of producing major weapons systems had grown at an annual rate of 20%. Melman observed that by 1996, “the cost of the B-2 bomber …exceeded the value of its weight in gold.”

McNamara went on to model the Pentagon after a corporate central office, defining policy, appointing chiefs of subordinate units, maintaining accounting and management functions with huge discretion. Each military service participated in the process of acquiring materiel and weapons. This process resulted in the tens of thousands becoming hundreds of thousands of employees, paid for by America’s tax dollars, to maximize the profits of weapons producers.

Melman minced no words in articulating the consequences.

“An industrial management has been installed in the federal government, under the Secretary of Defense, to control the nation’s largest network of industrial enterprises… the new state–management combines… economic, political, and military decision–making.”

“…Nowhere in the constitution is top economic power conferred by the constitution.”

“The operation of a permanent military economy makes the president the chief executive officer of the state management controlling the largest single block of capital resources, including the largest
aggregation of industrial facilities in the economy. Thereby, a core feature of a Leninist state design was installed in the federal government – top economic, political and military power in the same hands, often unconstrained by law.”

“…this combination of powers in the same hands has been a feature of statist societies – communist, fascist, and others – where individual rights cannot constrain central rule…”

Among the many critical consequences of this state controlled industry described by Melman, I’ll mention a few:

- Firms were no longer efficiency orientated – rather, industry produced increasingly complicated goods.
- Production had nothing to do with meeting the needs of ordinary consumers. Melman pointed out that a nuclear–powered submarine was a “technological masterpiece,” – but consumers can’t eat it; can’t wear it; can’t ride in it; can’t live in it; and can’t make anything with it.
- Labor lost control of any decision–making it had over production. With the influx of capital came an influx of white–collar middle managers, and an alienation – or disempowering – of workers.
- Where the U.S. was once a top producer and exporter of tools needed for production of consumer goods, the complexity of military production focused industry on specialized machinery and tools that have no utility in meeting consumer needs.
- The Pentagon consumed the talents of our scientists and engineers whose skills were needed in other sectors of our society.

In one of Melman’s last articles at the dawn of the 21st Century, his frustration was palpable. He noted that New York City put out a request for a proposal to spend about $3 billion to $4 billion to replace a number of subway cars. Not a single U.S. company bid on the proposal – in part because the US no longer had the tools it needed to build its subway trains. In this article, titled “In the Grip of a Permanent War Economy,” Melman calculated that if this manufacturing work were done in the U.S., it would have generated, directly and indirectly, about 32,000 jobs.

Melman shared his vision: “The production facilities and labor force that could deliver 6 new subway cars each week could produce 300 cars per year, and thereby provide new replacement cars for the New York Subway system in a 20–year cycle – for the 6,000 railcar fleet of the NY subway system...
Well-trained engineers are required to design the key subway transportation equipment. Therefore, we must note that it is almost 25 years since the last book was published in the U.S. on [this topic.] ... [This] is also true for every one of the industries targeted for deindustrialization during the second half of the 20th Century…"

There was an alternative vision that was percolating within the *economic conversion movement* in decades past with an intent to create and begin the process of reducing the economic decision-power of the war-making institutions. This was to be done by mandating a planning process for the changeover from military to civilian work in factories, laboratories, and military bases.

The plan was to set up a highly decentralized planning process based on “alternative-use committees” to do the necessary blueprinting. Half of each alternative-use committee would be named by management; the other half by the working people. There would be support of incomes during a changeover.

Nationally, a commission chaired by the Secretary of Commerce would publish a manual on local alternative-use planning. It would also encourage federal, state, and local government to make capital investment plans, creating new markets for the capital goods required for infrastructure repair.

Three principal functions would be served by economic conversion:

First, the planning stage would offer assurance to the working people of the war economy that they can have an economic future in a society where war-making is a diminished institution.

Second, reversing the process of economic decay in U.S. manufacturing in particular (and in the rest of the U.S. economy) the National Commission would be empowered to facilitate planning for capital investments in all aspects of infrastructure by governments of cities, counties, states and the federal government, which would comprise a massive program of new jobs and new markets.[1]

Third, the national network of alternative use committees would constitute a gain in decision-making power by all the working people involved.

Melman worked with students, union leaders, the peace movement and with Congress to create momentum around these ideas. There were some key events along the way.

In 1971, George McGovern included the idea of economic conversion when he announced his candidacy for the Democratic Presidential nomination. His statement included this position:
“…Basing our defense budget on actual needs rather than imaginary fears would lead to [budget] savings. Needless war and military waste contribute to the economic crisis not only through inflation, but by the dissipation of labor and resources and in non-productive enterprise…

For too long the taxes of our citizens and revenues desperately needed by our cities and states have been drawn into Washington and wasted on senseless war and unnecessary military gadgets… A major test of the 1970’s is the conversion of our economy from the excesses of war to the works of peace. I urgently call for conversion planning to utilize the talent and resources surplus to our military… for modernizing our industrial plants and meeting other peacetime needs.”

In 1976, SANE held a conference in New York City entitled "The Arms Race and the Economic Crisis." Melman was a featured speaker. This conference was instrumental in winning an economic conversion plank in the Democratic Party platform that year.

In 1988 and ‘89, Melman had several meetings with then Speaker of the House, Rep. Jim Wright. Wright convened a meeting of congressmen who were committed to support the economic conversion bill proposed by New York’s Rep. Ted Weiss. Speaker Wright told Melman that, in his opinion,

“…the arms race had taken on not only dangerous but also economically damaging characteristics, … and that spending on the military was a burden that sapped the strength of the whole society…”

On the first day of the opening of the 101st Congress, Speaker Wright convened a meeting of members who had proposed economic conversion legislation, and their aids. The purpose was to ensure that all proposals be joined into one, and that this legislation be given priority. To dramatize the importance of this bill, it would be given number H.R. 101.

Melman and SANE were elated. And then reality hit. As Melman reported:

“Supporters of such an initiative did not reckon with the enormous power of those opposed to any such move toward economic conversion. In the weeks that followed, these vested interests waged a concerted and aggressive campaign in Congress and the national media to bring down Jim Wright over allegations of financial misconduct.”

The allegations had little substance, but Newt Gingrich, representing a headquarters district of Lockheed Martin, led the Republican attack. Sadly, they won. According to Melman, “Their media campaign drowned out any further discussion of economic conversion… A historic opportunity had
I found an article written in 1990 from the LA Times, which reported about economic conversion plans developing in California and beyond. It included the following hopeful news:

Irvine, California Mayor Larry Agran, planned to make his home town a national model for economic conversion by using what all presumed would be “under-worked” defense companies to build a major monorail project. He envisioned a major local mass-transportation industry. His proposed Irvine Institute for Entrepreneurial Development would also look for ways to push local rocket scientists toward environmental cleanup, health care and other such enterprises.

In Los Angeles, Councilwoman Ruth Galanter, with the support of the International Assn. of Machinists, convened a committee to study prospects for converting aerospace jobs to establishing an electric car-manufacturing industry. They argued that there were linkages in technologies and skills across industries.

On the state level, California Assemblyman Sam Farr promoted a package of bills that required the governor to 1) convene an "economic summit" on conversion, 2) appoint a council to study the issue and 3) come up with a means of facilitating the transfer of military technology to the civilian sector.

Finally, at the federal level, Representative Ted Weiss from New York continued to push economic conversion legislation until his death in 1992. To my knowledge, no other Congressperson has taken on this issue.

George H.W. Bush’s attack on Iraq in the 1990 Persian Gulf War was a critical nail in the coffin of the national economic conversion movement.

There are some in the peace movement who continued to keep the embers of economic conversion alive. Many years ago in Groton, Connecticut, the local peace community organized a “listening project” to engage the community in conversation about what economic conversion might look like for General Dynamic’s Electric Boat Company, builder of submarines for the U.S. Navy. For more than 30 years, the Peace Economy Project in St. Louis has been advocating for conversion from a military to a more stable peace-based economy locally. The Woodstock peace community held a conference in 2009 focused on the conversion of Ametek/Rotron, a Woodstock manufacturer that makes parts used in F–16 fighter planes, Apache attack helicopters, tanks, and missile delivery systems. Certainly there are others out there engaging their home communities in envisioning alternatives to continued
production for endless war.

My partner, Bruce Gagnon, is the coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. He has been organizing around conversion since the 1980s. His typical question to any audience is: “What is the U.S.'s number one industrial export?” Audiences across the country shout out “weapons.” He then asks, “When weapons are your number one industrial export, what is your global marketing strategy?” “Endless war” becomes the refrain.

In 2003, Bruce and I moved to Maine, in part to be near Bath Iron Works, the General Dynamic’s owned production facility for naval destroyers that are deployed with Aegis weapons systems. These Aegis destroyers are part of the “Star Wars” or “missile defense” vision; they rely on space satellites when launched toward their targets. Bruce and I joined the vigils that peace groups organized in Bath, and Bruce organized some vigils for the Global Network. We would hold signs critical of the purpose of the Aegis destroyer (Aegis is not about defense; Aegis destroys) and would offer an alternative vision for the factory (build wind turbines, not destroyers).

Initially, people laughed, scoffed, scorned, and some spewed hateful things at us.

In 2007, Bruce and I moved to Bath with our friend Karen Wainberg. We bought a big old house; tore down a wall to create a community room; and began conversations in our home about the idea of economic conversion. We interviewed people who had lived in the community for awhile. We interviewed some workers at BIW.

In fact one worker, Peter Woodruff, joined our “conversion study group” early on. Broken-hearted by the role of the Aegis destroyers in the shock and awe campaign on Iraq, Peter has been a brave and creative organizer inside BIW. He plays with designs for creating energy through using tidal power; he has been an avid supporter of wind power using offshore wind turbines. Peter has bravely organized petition drives, created bumper stickers, publicly posted articles that educate his colleagues to the reality of the situation. He also spends two hours a week, with Bruce Gagnon, hosting a radio show on the campus of the local private college that espouses an anti-war theme, including conversations about economic conversion.

As BIW copes with episodic layoffs, a diminishing need for more U.S. war ships, and workers are feeling some job insecurity, fewer people scoff at our signs and message. Envisioning a future for BIW in a peace economy is an essential asset to the community.

Meanwhile, there is momentum in Maine to generate wind power options. A professor at the University of Maine is experimenting with composite materials to create a prototype for an offshore
wind turbine, and a former governor has created a private company to put wind turbines throughout the state,

As a friend who was an employee at BIW many years ago points out, BIW did convert years ago – from making commercial ships to naval destroyers. Can it experience another conversion now, making wind turbines and other renewable energy products?

What if BIW converted to making hospital ships? Paul Chappell talked to us here at this conference about transforming the U.S. military to a humanitarian relief organization. Maine author Kate Braestrup spoke at Maine’s Veteran’s for Peace PTSD conference this year. She told the story of her Marine son who has experienced a number of deployments focused on disaster relief. She asked him how he can do humanitarian relief when the equipment they carry were instruments of war? He told her it took some creativity, but they were able to transform their equipment to rebuild infrastructure. Braestrup then asked this question: given that devastating extreme weather events will continue to occur, why don’t we build hospital ships at BIW to meet the need in disaster relief – and if we need to adapt the materiel to fight wars, we can figure out how to do that?

It behooves the peace movement to create a vision that the populace can get excited about – a vision that will capture people’s imagination. A vision that sees skills and talents of our engineers and scientists creating the renewable energy infrastructure that is critical to surviving the 21st Century; a vision that engages peace activists, environmentalists, labor, students, artists, food security folks in creating plans for how we will heat homes, feed people, transport people in the year 2040. This is the true security need for the U.S., and the world.

Karen Kwiatkowski’s shared an important admonition at the conference. The MIC culture of cost maximizing/cronyism/lack of accountability (and, as Melman noted, worker alienation) makes its factories an unlikely location for the rebuilding of a worn out infrastructure and creating the new energy models. Perhaps we are talking more about reconstruction than conversion. But it behooves each of us – locally – to look around, determine the needs, create the collaborations, and wrestle the funds away to start building a survivable future.

Economic conversion is an idea whose time has come. As evidence, I submit that we have an ally in none other than Deepak Chopra, the preeminent leader in the field of mind–body medicine. Few people know that, after the 2008 election, Dr. Chopra sent a public letter to Barak Obama which he called “Nine Steps to Peace for Obama in the New Year.” Asserting that it was an anti-war constituency that elected Obama, Dr. Chopra invoked the spirit of Dwight D. Eisenhower in insisting Obama move from an economy dependent on war–making to a peace–based economy. Dr. Chopra’s
recommendations included: writing into every defense contract a requirement for a peacetime project; subsidizing conversion of military companies to peaceful uses with tax incentives and direct funding; converting military bases to housing for the poor; phasing out all foreign military bases; and calling a moratorium on future weapons technologies.

The vision is clear, it is obvious, it is mainstream. An important next step for us is to determine what we can do in our home communities to empower local unions and workers, environmentalists, health care workers, social workers, spiritual leaders, and the neighbors next door to engage the debate.

References for this article from Seymour Melman


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[1] Melman frequently referred to the annual “report card” published by the society of civil engineers to highlight the declining infrastructure in the U.S. (deteriorating roads, bridges, schools, etc.), a situation that continues to worsen.
ARMY INDIFFERENCE TO KILLING, SUFFERING, AND INJUSTICE, BRADLEY MANNING, AND ST. PAUL

Posted by: "Nate Goldshlag" nateg@pobox.com nategold

Mon Jul 11, 2011 8:03 am (PDT)  A powerful account. Nate

http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj1107&article=stranger-in-a-strange-land

“Stranger in a Strange Land” By Evan Knappenberger

A former Army intelligence analyst in Iraq talks about Bradley Manning, the weight of conscience, and the witness of St. Paul.

In April 2011, producers at PBS' documentary news show Frontline requested an interview with me in my capacity as a former U.S. Army intelligence analyst. They were filming a special called "WikiSecrets" about alleged whistleblower Bradley Manning, Army intelligence culture, and WikiLeaks. At more than one point in the process, PBS producers asked if I was absolutely sure I was ready to share information that the Pentagon had repeatedly warned me not to talk about. Was I ready to risk jail for appearing to violate the Army nondisclosure agreement that all soldiers sign?

There are very few analysts -- current or former -- who are willing to speak openly about their experiences in Iraq, according to the Frontline representatives. To defend Manning and tell the truth about the military culture of corruption, I had to dig pretty deep and be willing to risk a charge of violating the nondisclosure agreement. But this is something I did deliberately, out of conscience. According to my lawyer, I could get 10 years in federal prison just for talking about my experiences.

To the news media, those who are privileged insiders in military intelligence are valuable resources; to those in political power, the threat of transparency makes us a liability. Translators and military intelligence specialists are traumatized in unique way. While doing some of the dirtiest work in the "global war on terror," we are coerced into morally and ethically dangerous situations and intimidated into silence.
The untold story is that the **U.S. military intelligence community is rife with trauma** that few outsiders understand, a suffering kept secret by the authorities in part because of its fundamentally transformative power.

I was 17 when I joined the Army in 2003. I had barely graduated from high school, but had high aptitude scores -- something the Army was looking for. Novelist and pop philosopher Ayn Rand had me convinced that I was justified in my choice to make a violent living using guns and computers. I was excited to mete out justice like a John Wayne cowboy or a Jack Bauer operative.

During my first week in basic training, I watched a man nearly die of pneumonia and heat stroke in the Missouri sun at Fort Leonard Wood. The drill sergeants ridiculed him as a "faker" when he collapsed following a strenuous forced march. He fell face first on the pavement and lay there, twitching. The drill sergeants screamed and spat in my face when I helped drag him into the shade. I remember pouring water on the man and loading him into the back of a truck. After a leisurely drive by a drill sergeant to the base hospital, I carried the man inside on my back. "It's really bad this time," said the doctor.

Later I asked the drill sergeant how I could trust her with my life when she almost let him die. "Private," she told me, "if you died tonight, we’d go right on without you in the morning."

**The Army taught us well that human lives were of little consequence, that humanity itself was a concept of the weak and the broken.**

By the time I was 20, I had a rifle and a top-secret security clearance. My mission in Iraq? "Win the war on terror."

My first night at Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, I watched grizzled soldiers kick in the door to an Iraqi home and drag out a teenage boy in his underwear. I watched as they questioned him for hours, allowing him to be smacked around by an Iraqi interpreter who was probably a former neighbor of the boy. Soon I was leading my own interrogation sessions to provide fresh intelligence to my unit. I helped the command staff plan operations for bringing in more Iraqis for questioning.
I also worked as a targeting analyst compiling intelligence data for "preparation of the battlefield." In this, I weighed the lives of my fellow human beings -- military and civilian, American and Iraqi -- and decided fates with the stroke of a pen. By my 21st birthday I was responsible for many deaths. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military kills innocent civilians as well as armed combatants. Like the military, I never kept count of the lives I helped to end.

The Army, supported by the voting public, was happy to pack me off to play God with a gun and a laptop, inadequate training, and little guidance. I was a stranger in a strange land, unprepared for the terrible weight of moral ambiguity that my country hung around my neck and unprepared for its corrosive effect on my soul.

Another Army intelligence analyst -- 23-year-old Bradley Manning of Crescent, Oklahoma -- was arrested in Iraq in May 2010 on suspicion of releasing restricted military documents to the WikiLeaks website. For outing war crimes and causing a year-long public-affairs crisis for the State and Defense departments, Manning spent nearly 10 months in maximum-security, solitary confinement at the Quantico Marine Corps base in Virginia. Stripped naked at night and forcibly sleep-deprived, his conditions were so severe that Amnesty International and the ACLU decried them as torture. In April, after international outcry, he was finally moved to Leavenworth prison where he is being held under more humane conditions.

Though several years apart, Manning and I went through the same training course at Fort Leonard Wood and the same intelligence analysis school at Fort Huachuca. We both struggled with the arbitrary and reckless military discipline. I have taken action against military abuses for reasons of conscience, and Bradley is alleged to have done so as well. I suspect that we are both riddled through with the guilty realization that we were forced to kill our fellow beings in support of indefensible policies.

By delegating to our children the power of life and death -- whether directly or through the intelligence apparatus -- we make them proxy agents whom we can then praise as heroes or write off as "bad apples," depending on the direction of the political wind at any given moment.
According to news reports, Manning had a transformative conscientious awakening when he found himself responsible for the unjust imprisonment of 15 Iraqi activists. When he determined that the pamphlets they were distributing were not "terrorist tracts," but instead highlighted corruption in the al-Maliki government, Manning took the information directly to his commanding officer. "He didn't want to hear any of it," he reportedly wrote. "He told me to shut up and explain how we could assist the [Iraqi Federal Police] in finding more detainees."

Manning also allegedly discovered classified footage taken from Army Apache helicopters during a 2007 air-to-ground attack near Baghdad that killed two Reuters correspondents and at least 10 others, and wounded two children. Manning's arrest came after he allegedly took responsibility for the 2010 release of what came to be called the "Collateral Murder" video.

If the government's claims about Manning’s actions are true, then I believe he acted in disobedience against what he perceived to be an unjust and immoral authority. It's also clear that his pre-trial punishment was intentionally symbolic, as well as inhumane; it was a warning to the many other would-be whistleblowers and abused soldiers.

The U.S. military classifies virtually everything in war as an official state secret. All soldiers must sign nondisclosure agreements upon return from overseas duties. In effect, this outlaws any dialogue about the wars. It silences the most direct criticisms from the participants of the wars themselves. It also creates a despondent and dehumanizing loneliness in veterans, who are unable to share their experiences.

Many of my friends who went to Iraq in an intelligence capacity are now dead, disabled, imprisoned like Manning, or AWOL and fleeing imprisonment. I acted on my conscience only later, after leaving the Army, and more cautiously. As one of the few intelligence veterans bearing public witness to conscience, I feel it’s now my turn to speak out on behalf of truth and justice. To be honest, I’m scared. The prospect of absolute idleness and gradual emotional rot in prison terrifies me. But I cannot "stand idly by" (Leviticus 19:16) while my friends suffer for their acts of conscience.
St. Paul is perhaps the greatest of all ex-intelligence professionals. Having spent years as "Saul" hunting down and eliminating Christians, he was called by Christ, quite literally, to quit his violence. The most unlikely of apostles, Saul became the greatest proponent of Christ's peace. Beaten by scourges, bloodied and shackled, facing certain death, Paul gazed out at the world with compassion, secure in the knowledge and faith of the living God of justice.

Through the conversion of Saul, Christ sends us a clear and relevant message: It is precisely those soldiers with dark and heavy hearts, whose consciences have turned, who will lay down their weapons and take up the cross. Christ is also telling us that the real moral authorities are not political or military leaders but rather the formerly dejected and the radically transformed. Though nations wantonly continue to send their precious sons and daughters off to kill -- and then ignore, jail, and often destroy those sons and daughters who finally object to the violence -- Christ's peace also rises in the hearts of these weary ones.

To discover the peace of God inside us is within the power of all, believers or not. This is something that we can witness in the Bradley Mannings, the AWOL soldiers, the conscientious objectors, and the Sauls of the world -- those agents of mindless death who are put on the path to redemption by simple acts of conscience.

In my congregation we pray the Lenten prayer, like Peter at the Last Supper: "Humbly allow that we may follow [Christ] to the cross." But, also like Peter, it is a rare and bitterly noteworthy moment when we finally comprehend the enormity of this request.

In the meantime, I wonder, is it possible to stand with Christ the condemned, Christ the tortured, Christ the detainee, Christ the inmate, and Christ the traitor? The only answer I've found is to stand with all the accused, tortured, and detained. How else can we be worthy of our salvation?

Evan Knappenberger is a disabled Iraq war veteran, a student, and a community peace activist living in Bellingham, Washington.

Remains of US Soldiers Dumped in Landfill, Air Force Admits
Whitlock and Jaffe report: "Asked if it was appropriate or dignified to incinerate troops' body parts and dispose of them in a landfill, Jones declined to answer directly. 'We have recognized a much better way of doing things,' he said. 'Let me be emphatic: I think the current procedures are better.' The disclosure of the landfill disposals comes in the aftermath of multiple federal investigations that documented 'gross mismanagement' at Dover Air Force Base, which receives the remains of all service members killed in action in Afghanistan, Iraq or elsewhere overseas."

**The War on Civil Liberties**

As the US scales back the war in Afghanistan, shouldn't we be scaling back the sacrifices of civil liberties we've made here at home?

The killing of Osama bin Laden and other high-level Al Qaeda leaders has helped persuade President Obama to withdraw 30,000 troops from Afghanistan by next summer. According to the president, the “tide of war is receding”—at least in Afghanistan. But what about here at home? It's been almost ten years since Al Qaeda's attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The government responded by adopting, in short order, extraordinary measures to prevent another attack. But if the tide of war is receding, shouldn't we be reconsidering the sacrifices in our liberties that we made to fight that war?

In fact, there seems to be little recognition that, on the home front, the tide of war is receding.

In May Congress reauthorized, for four more years, three controversial provisions of the Patriot Act, rejecting all proposals to add safeguards. The provisions permit the government to obtain “roving” wiretaps without identifying the person or the phones to be tapped; demand records from libraries and businesses without establishing any reason to believe the target is involved in criminal, much less terrorist, activity; and use surveillance powers initially
restricted to agents of foreign governments or terrorist organizations against “lone wolves” not affiliated with any such group or government.

Lost in the muted debate over these three provisions was any discussion of still more troubling Patriot Act authorizations, which were initially enacted without “sunset” clauses and have therefore never been reconsidered. These include ideological grounds for excluding or deporting foreign nationals for association with terrorist groups, expansively defined to encompass virtually any group of two or more that has ever used or threatened to use a weapon against person or property. They also include a provision that makes it a felony to advocate for human rights and peace if you do so with a “foreign terrorist organization.” (The Supreme Court upheld that statute against a First Amendment challenge last summer, in a case I argued.) And they include the authority to rely on secret evidence to freeze the assets of American charities simply by claiming they are “under investigation,” without any finding of wrongdoing. (In another case I am litigating, a federal court has declared that procedure unconstitutional, but the Obama administration continues to defend it.)

In June the New York Times reported that the FBI is about to relax yet again the rules that govern its national security investigations. Those guidelines, promulgated in 1976 in response to widespread abuses in spying on civil rights and peace groups, have been watered down numerous times, before and after 9/11. Now, according to the Times, Attorney General Eric Holder is set to loosen the reins even further. The new rules will allow FBI agents to rummage through citizens’ trash, conduct searches of computer databases and repeatedly use surveillance squads to track people without any suspicion of individual wrongdoing or court approval.

These “reforms” come on the heels of evidence that even under the old rules, the FBI
overstepped its bounds. According to documents released in response to a Freedom of Information Act request, the bureau spent at least three years intensively investigating Scott Crow, an activist in East Austin, Texas, who has never been convicted of anything more significant than trespassing. The FBI’s 440-page file on Crow, despite being heavily redacted, revealed that agents recorded the license plates of his guests, monitored his phone calls and e-mails, fished through his trash, infiltrated political meetings he attended, subpoenaed his bank records and even asked the IRS to investigate him for tax evasion (the IRS declined). The investigation seems to have been closed in 2008. Why it was opened remains a mystery. Yet news of the Crow investigation appears to have prompted no reforms. Instead, the attorney general is ready to relax the rules on FBI spying still further.

Meanwhile, an ongoing investigation of peace activists and labor organizers in the Midwest, run by US Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald, has raised concerns that the government is once again confusing activism with terrorism, a problem it has long had. A 2010 inspector general report found, for example, that the FBI had, under the rubric of counterterrorism, investigated a social justice center in Pittsburgh, a Quaker activist, and members of Greenpeace and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

These and other abuses are a predictable result of the mandate that the FBI “prevent” all terrorist acts. That unrealistic goal impels the agency to sweep broadly and to investigate intrusively even when it has no credible evidence that a person is engaged in, or planning, wrongdoing. The guidelines have been relaxed to permit just that. In the name of the “war on terror,” FBI agents have been freed to investigate any of us, “proactively.” The bureau doesn’t have the resources to investigate us all, of course. But the relaxed rules allow agents to focus on whomever they consider suspect—activists, leftists, outspoken or devout Muslims, and the
If history is any guide, at some point the accumulated record of misguided investigations, abusive and wasteful infiltrations, and overly aggressive deployment of informants will spur reform in the opposite direction, as Americans insist that the sacrifices in our liberties have gone too far. As yet, however, the public response has been to look the other way. In the United States the tide of war may or may not be receding, but the tide of civil liberties is still out.

Related Content

No More Excuses, Rape is Rape!
How the Obama Administration Can End the War on Terror
Robert Mueller’s Questionable Extension as FBI Director
100% Scared: How the National Security Complex Grows on Terrorism Fears

MAXINE HONG KINGSTON’S STORIES BY VETERANS
Kingston helped to organize workshops finally totaling some 500 vets from five wars for vets to tell their stories of war trauma, and for many to turn their experiences into poems, essays, and novels. Some of the best are published in her Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace. The books was introduced in Bill Moyers Journal on PBS, which is now in print in Bill Moyers Journal: The Conversation Continues (New Press, 2011).

WOUNDED VETERANS

Veterans’ Journeys Home: Life After Afghanistan and Iraq
By Lori Holyfield, Paradigm, 2011.
A powerful look at the unique challenges faced by today’s veterans
“‘War is pathological,’ Lori Holyfield declares, ‘not the soldiers who experience it.’ This fine book demonstrates how profoundly war wounds everyone it touches. Holyfield has brought truth, wisdom, heart and a plan for hope to the American veteran experience.” —Edward Tick, author of War and the Soul

Veterans’ Journeys Home is a vivid portrayal of military life and its aftermath for U.S. troops who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hearing the voices of those who have experienced combat and trauma, the reader journeys with women and men from basic training to active duty and back to civilian life. Highlighting the challenges our veterans face in today’s complex and changing
military culture, the book depicts the sometimes haunting and visceral memories of returning soldiers, reveals conversations with mental health providers, and offers an alternative approach to healing the emotional wounds of war. Sociologist and activist Holyfield lets the voices of combat tell the story of war. For any reader seeking a deeper understanding of the special human challenges of the recent wars, *Veterans’ Journeys Home* is valuable to veterans of all wars and their families and to mental health communities, policymakers, and any reader invested in seeing that our nation’s veterans receive a true “welcome home.”

**Lori Holyfield**, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Arkansas, is the author of *Moving Up and Out: Poverty, Education, and the Single Parent Family*, with a Foreword by Hillary Clinton.

Feelings of Guilt May Be Top Factor in PTSD
Gregg Zoroya, USA Today, Nov. 26, 2011, RSN
Gregg Zoroya reports: "The idea of 'moral injury' as a cause of PTSD is new to psychiatry. The American Psychiatric Association is only now considering new diagnostic criteria for the disorder that would include feelings of shame and guilt, says David Spiegel, a member of the working group rewriting the PTSD section. Traditionally, PTSD symptoms such as nightmares or numbness to the world have been linked to combat violence, fear of being killed or loss of friends."


ILLEGAL INVASIONS AND OCCUPATIONS MAKE ENEMIES

**Noam Chomsky on Ron Paul’s 9/11 Theories: “What He Said Is Completely Uncontroversial”**
September 14, 2011 by Run Ron Paul
from youtube comments:

DemocracyNow.org – During the most recent Republican presidential debate on Monday, September 12th, Congressman Ron Paul of Texas drew boos and jeers from the crowd and his fellow debaters for his views on the roots of 9/11 attacks. Dr. Paul criticized U.S. foreign policy as the catalyst stating, “we’re under great threat because we occupy so many countries… We have to be honest with ourselves. What would we do if another country, say China, did to us what we do to all those countries over there?” For more, Democracy Now! spoke with Professor
Emeritus of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Noam Chomsky. Dr. Chomsky responded to Dr. Paul’s comments by reciting the history of antagonism to US policy, concluding: “I think what he said is completely uncontroversial. You can read it in government documents.”

EXCERPT OF RUSH TRANSCRIPT:

AARON MATÉ (DN! Co-Host): Well, Noam, you mentioned the changes in discourse between 10 years ago and today. And actually, this issue of the reasons behind 9/11 came up last night at the Republican presidential debate. Congress Member Ron Paul of Texas drew boos from the crowd and a rebuke from other candidates on the podium when he criticized U.S. foreign policy in discussing the roots of 9/11.

REP. RON PAUL: We’re under great threat because we occupy so many countries. We’re in 130 countries. We have 900 bases around the world. We’re going broke. The purpose of al-Qaeda was to attack us, invite us over there, where they can target us. And they have been doing it. They have more attacks against us and the American interests per month than occurred in all the years before 9/11. But we’re there, occupying their land. And if we think that we can do that and not have retaliation, we’re kidding ourselves. We have to be honest with ourselves. What would we do if another country, say China, did to us what we do to all those countries over there?

So, this whole idea that the whole Muslim world is responsible for this and they’re attacking us because we’re free and prosperous, that is just not true. Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda have been explicit. They have been explicit, and they wrote and said that we attacked—we attacked America because you had bases on our holy land in Saudi Arabia, you do not give Palestinians a fair treatment, and you have been bombing—I didn’t say that, I’m trying to get you to understand what the motive was behind the bombing. At the same time, we had been bombing and killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis for 10 years. Would you be annoyed? If you’re not annoyed, then there’s some problem.

AARON MATÉ: That was Republican Congress Member Ron Paul of Texas speaking last night at the Republican presidential debate. Noam Chomsky, your response?

NOAM CHOMSKY: I think what he said is completely uncontroversial. You can read it in government documents. You can find it in polls. Maybe people don’t like to hear it, but, as I mentioned before, it goes back to the 1950s. Actually, right after 9/11, the Wall Street Journal, to its credit, did a study of privileged Muslims, sometimes called “monied Muslims,” people in the Muslim world who are deeply embedded in the U.S. global project—lawyers, directors of multinational corporations and so on, not the general population. And it was very much like what Eisenhower had—was concerned about, and the National Security Council, in the 1950s. There was a lot of antagonism to U.S. policy in the region, partly [because of ]
dictators blocking democracy and development, just as the National Security Council concluded in 1958.

CONSEQUENCES TO ENEMY CIVILIANS

Northwest Arkansas Times
Dear Editor:

We can thank the Northwest Arkansas Times and its sister newspapers for printing the names of our soldiers killed in our present wars. Many have been killed, inevitably: the Afghan and Iraq wars are longer than WWI and WWII. The killed soldiers deserve remembrance, and disclosure is the business of a newspaper.

But their number is small compared to the number of civilians killed. During the twentieth century, wars killed more and more civilians, from the one-to-nine ratio of civilian-to-soldier mortality in WWI to nine-to-one in many of the conflicts occurring after the Cold War. For its toll on civilians in war, it’s called the “gruesome century,” or the “century of slaughter.”

This reality makes me reflect on the immense disproportion of our newspapers’ reporting of combatant and civilian deaths: every US soldier identified; zero civilians. Even the pressures of patriotism and ethnocentrism combined seem inadequate to explain such extremely distorted reporting.

Do the editors believe their readers so undiscerning they cannot perceive the disparity, or so unfeeling they do not care? Do they think we have abandoned to xenophobia our lifetime commitment to protecting women, children, the elderly, or that we think only our vulnerable deserve sympathy?

If they do, they blunder, for many of us can imagine the deaths of other nations’ innocents, and each attempt to erase them only diminishes for us the credibility and authority of the newspapers.

Dick Bennett

The Deaths of Others: The Fate of Civilians in America's Wars
John Tirman

Jun 2011

Description
Americans are greatly concerned about the number of our troops killed in battle--100,000 dead in World War I; 300,000 in World War II; 33,000 in the Korean War; 58,000 in Vietnam; 4,500 in Iraq; over 1,000 in Afghanistan--and rightly so. But why are we so indifferent, often oblivious, to the far greater number of casualties suffered by those we fight and those we fight for?

This is the compelling, largely unasked question John Tirman answers in The Deaths of Others. Between six and seven million people died in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq alone, the majority of them civilians. And yet Americans devote little attention to these deaths. Other countries, however, do pay attention, and Tirman argues that if we
want to understand why there is so much anti-Americanism around the world, the first place to look is how we conduct war. We understandably strive to protect our own troops, but our rules of engagement with the enemy are another matter. From atomic weapons and carpet bombing in World War II to napalm and daisy cutters in Vietnam and beyond, we have used our weapons intentionally to kill large numbers of civilians and terrorize our adversaries into surrender. Americans, however, are mostly ignorant of these facts, believing that American wars are essentially just, necessary, and "good." Tirman investigates the history of casualties caused by American forces in order to explain why America remains so unpopular and why US armed forces operate the way they do.

Trenchant and passionate, The Deaths of Others forces readers to consider the tragic consequences of American military action not just for Americans, but especially for those we fight.

Features

- Passionate and sweeping account of the impact of U.S. wars on America's opponents
- Tirman's critical account of the American way of war will be very controversial
- Highly readable narrative history that covers all of America's modern wars

Reviews

"This sad and gripping record of crimes we dare not face, and the probing analysis of the roots of indifference and denial, tell us all too much about ourselves. It should be read, and pondered." -Noam Chomsky

"John Tirman has not only written a profoundly important, revelatory work about something that most people in this country ignore; he has looked deep into our history and the American mind to see why we ignore it. I wish I could give this highly readable book to everyone, from general to private to the civilian bureaucrats who send them off to kill, who shares the illusion that war mainly involves soldiers." -Adam Hochschild, author of To End All Wars

"The Deaths of Others is an incredibly important venture. I know of no other book that so comprehensively catalogues the victims of U.S. wars . . . Tirman has given us the definitive study of an extremely important but neglected subject. It a must-read for anyone concerned with the lethal impact of U.S. policy on people in all corners of the world." --The Progressive

"Stunning . . . Tirman lays out his strenuously argued case with considerable cogency . . . Tirman renders us great service by providing a fuller picture of the consequences of war and challenging us not to reject data simply because it is not congruent with our favored worldview . . . If Americans today marshal the resolve to enact workable norms ensuring that our use of drones will always discriminate between civilians and legitimate enemy targets, then we will at last be facing up to the crucial moral questions raised in this book." --America

About the Author(s)

John Tirman is Principal Research Scientist and Executive Director of the Center for International Studies, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His books include Terror, Insurgency, and the State: Ending Protracted Conflicts and 100 Ways America Is Screwing Up the World.

DAMAGE TO PLANET

BOOKS AND FILMS:

- EMPIRE, MILITARISM, WARS VS ENVIRONMENT, EARTH, SPECIES

(For details see this and previous newsletters on Consequences and newsletters on Environment and Climate Change)

- Planet Earth by Rosalie Bertell
- Threshold: The Crisis of Western Culture by Thom Hartmann
- Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence by Christian Parenti
- Global Warring: How Environmental, Economic, and Political Crises Will Redraw the World Map by Cleo Paskal
ALL THINGS ARE CONNECTED
Rosalie Bertell’s new book, "Planet Earth the Latest weapon of War", reveals the unbelievable truth in the new generation of super-weapons. Important books are rare - very rare. "Planet Earth the Latest Weapon of War" is one such rarity. Like Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring it deserves to be read by everyone who cares a jot about their future. For it reveals that, behind carefully spin doctored names like 'the Star Wars project’, the military is now testing radically new weapons which so profoundly imperil the earth, and all life on it, that to deploy them in the name of security is like suggesting that becoming a suicide-bomber increases life expectancy.

----- As a distinguished American scientist, world expert on radiation, and winner of major international awards for science, Dr Bertell is no scaremonger. Yet her cool, incisive, fact-packed, prose not only reveals weapons worthy of science fiction, but shows that testing them may be costing thousands of innocent civilian lives - in peacetime.

----- She exposes how the military have, for decades, been secretly conducting experiments, including high-level nuclear explosions, which may disrupt the vital layers of the atmosphere which protect us from the sun's lethal radiation. She says these experiments are often conducted without even discussing with non-military experts the hazards of damaging these life-preserving earth-veils. And she believes that such experiments may already have accelerated global warming and contributed to earthquakes and freak weather conditions.

----- The story unfolds gently. She tells us that, for four years, a Russian thermonuclear bomb a thousand times more powerful than Hiroshima bomb circled above our
heads. And that a single rocket launched by the US military merely carried enough plutonium to cause lung cancer in 20 million people - had it exploded like some of its non-loaded predecessors.

Radiation belt
----- In July 1962 NASA announced that high altitude nuclear tests had created a new radiation belt 750 miles deep, girdling the earth. This damage and pollution was compounded by 'me too' experiments by the USSR. Dr Bertell says it was 10 years before American scientists realised that it would be hundreds of years before the vital earth-shielding Van Allen belts of the earth's atmosphere would recover from such onslaughts.
----- However, the repercussions may not be limited to the atmosphere itself. She says that, after one nuclear experiment, which created new electromagnetic belts in the atmosphere, the caribou mysteriously failed to migrate for the first time in 3000 years. A warning perhaps of how the migration of animals, fish and birds may be affected by disturbances to electromagnetic fields - and of the potential impact on man. For, without the caribou, many Inuit people starved to death. Moreover, the nuclear radiation was not confined to the upper atmosphere: caribou and people who survived were dangerously contaminated with caesium 137, and cancer, lung disease and infant mortality soared.
----- Despite opposition from the International Union of Astronomers, the US military even put 350,000,000 copper needles into orbit. An experiment which Dr Bertell says some scientist believed may have upset the balance of the planetary magnetic field, causing the massive 8.5 Alaskan earthquake and losing Chile part of its coast. Yet she shows that such experiments are small beer compared with what is being done today - and is to come.

HAARP - Ionosphere modification
----- For example, she describes HAARP (America's High-frequency Active Auroral Research Programme) a multimillion pound 'civilian' installation, hidden away in Alaska, ostensibly intended to 'alter the performance of communications and surveillance systems'. Seemingly innocent enough, until she explains that this grid of 180 transmission towers is funded by the military and is part of the 'Star Wars' defence network. HAARP, and its linked brother projects are, she says, known to the military as 'ionosphere modification facilities'. For, according to the proposal for its installation, HAARP is intended to trigger and control natural processes in the ionosphere in ways 'that could be potentially exploited for department of
Defence Purposes'. In other words the ionosphere, which shelters the earth, will be used as the barrel of the gun. Dr Bertell suggests that so great is the power of such transmitters that even living near them could be dangerous. She quotes a US federal Environmental Impact statement which says that HAARP can 'raise the internal body temperature of nearby people ...(and) detonate aerial munitions, scramble aircraft communications and flight controls'. Even slight increases in body temperature can alter functioning of brain and body and, as she points out, even a small rise in electromagnetic radiation may cause an increase in cataracts and leukaemia and alter brain and body chemistry, blood pressure and heart rates. But such direct harm is the mere tip of the iceberg.

In one type of experiment these transmission towers will, Dr Bertell reveals, combine to emit a giant beam, of such power that, 'in a burst lasting more than a few minutes - it will slice through the ionosphere like a microwave knife' producing a long incision in this vital layer of the atmosphere. However, the main aim of HAARP is, she explains, to heat sections of the ionosphere until they bulge to form a curved 'lens' which will 'reflect' HAARP's massive energy beams back to earth to destroy selected targets - presumably without leaving even a trace of what caused the devastation.

The layers of our atmosphere are so little understood that no one can possibly know the impact of cutting the ionosphere open, or of making it bulge like a lens. Moreover, she points out that scientists have warned that the energy from HAARP may combine with a natural wave frequency with results which are 'quite disproportionate to the level of input' - including disrupting the harmony between 'earth life forms....and....earth's life support systems'.

The rings round Saturn are thought to have been caused by a comparable interaction between energy waves. So, the possibility that HAARP, and its confreres, might trigger catastrophic changes to this planet cannot be ruled out. As Dr Bertell explains, everything is connected, 'everything in our universe is in dynamic equilibrium and this interference (from HAARP) may destabilise a system that has established and maintained its own cycle for millions of years' - protecting life on earth.

Nor is that all. Dr Bertell says that both HAARP and installations in Russia - on which America has, remarkably, collaborated - can also create pulsed, extremely low frequency (ELF) waves which have been directed deep into
the earth itself, potentially disrupting delicately poised tectonic plates of the earth's crust, such as those of California's San Andreas fault. Given the little understood interplay between tectonic plates, volcano's and the earth's molten core, to call this playing with fire would be an absurd understatement.

----- Nor, it seems are these the only military installations threatening earth's viability. Dr Bertell tells us that HAARP is just one of a growing chain of astonishingly powerful, and potentially interactive, military installations, using varied types of electromagnetic fields or wavelengths, each with a different ability to affect the earth or its atmosphere. For example, an installation in Alaska will have a magnetic field more than 60,000 times greater than the earth itself.

----- To anyone who knows the impact of magnetic fields on the human body the potential risks of such an installation are obvious. Equally, as Dr Bertell points out, the earth's magnetic field is both produced by electric currents in the earth's liquid core and interacts with the Van Allen belts of the earth's atmosphere in ways not yet understood.

----- With typical restraint, she chooses not to guesstimate the effect that a magnetic field 60,000 times greater than the earth's will have on the earth's core or the atmosphere. Yet she believes that military tests may already have disturbed earth equilibrium. In addition to showing how earlier military tests have massively contributed to ozone depletion and global warming Dr Bertell suggests that some freak weather conditions and 'natural' disasters may have been directly caused by testing installations such as HAARP.

Links to earthquakes and freak weather

----- For example, in 1977 a freak storm which devastated a small town in Wisconsin and destroyed 350 hectares of forest, followed hot on the heels of a government ELF wave experiment. While The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist reported that an ELF wave transmitter lay right in the middle of another storm which brought down 150 - 200 times more rain than normal. These links are more than purely circumstantial, for she says that weather modification is on the US air force agenda, and in 1992 the Russians told the Wall Street Journal they could already achieve it. And the Wisconsin storm offers what looks very much like direct evidence.

----- The question is, does anyone have the wisdom to control weather wisely, and unselfishly? And do they even begin to understand the potential for unexpected side-affects from all these experiments. As she points out, it is since the inception of Star Wars experiments that El Nino
has changed its cycle and become far more severe with devastating effects.

----- Equally, a Soviet experiment with the ionosphere directly preceded an earthquake in China which killed 650,000 people. While in America ELF-type waves were detected immediately before a San Francisco earthquake in 1989, and unnatural and unexplained low frequency waves were detected before earthquakes in Japan and California in 1989, and before an earthquake in Los Angeles in 1994. We can only wonder whether such ELF waves preceded the recent earthquakes in El Salvador and India this year, and whether the carnage has been caused by 'security experiments' by one of the 'great powers'.

----- What is certain, as Dr Bertell shows, is that, globally, the number of earthquakes a year has more than doubled since the inception of military experiments which affect the earth and its atmosphere. Even this could, of course, be mere coincidence but another fact suggests something unusual is going on. Inexplicably, an earthquake in Bolivia in 1994 originated 600km below the earth's surface - 24 times deeper than normal.

----- However, even if no such disasters can be laid at the door of the world's military, weapons which interfere with the atmosphere violate the 1976 Environment Modification Convention. Yet, she tells us that in January 1991, despite America having signed that convention, the White House waived the requirement for actions by the Pentagon to be assessed for environmental impact. However, America and Russia are not alone in possessing such weapons. Her revelations of 30 years of military innovations show that Britain, Germany and NATO have all been involved in military developments which show a cavalier disregard for life on earth.

----- Dr Bertell is perhaps one of the few people in the world who could write this book. As leader of medical commissions to both Bhopal and Chernobyl she is skilled in unearthing facts from beneath mountains of disinformation - accurately scooping the world's media, on the truth about depleted uranium weapons, by more than a year. As a nun dedicated to serving in the world she does not shrink from the unpopularity accorded a messenger. And her standing as a scientist, personal integrity, and evidence of meticulous research, challenge any yearning to disbelieve her.

----- A long-standing opponent of nuclear weapons, she sees today's military research as a 'cancer of the body politic' consuming human, financial, and natural resources which are desperately needed elsewhere. 'I would liken
society's dependence on the military to a family in which one partner is addicted to something and claims a large proportion of money for feeding the addiction'. As she points out, the billions annexed by defence projects create the very deprivation which eventually fosters war. Moreover, she says military research sequesters many top scientists, 'This "brain drain" from the civilian economy may be depriving us of those who could resolve the most serious survival problems now facing the biosphere'.

----- This is not a comfortable, or easy, book and needs to be chewed slowly, in small helpings. Yet it is well worth chewing and her overall message is one of hope. She says we need to redefine the militaristic word 'security' to mean 'the protection and responsible stewardship of the Earth' - and redirect former military expenditure towards conflict resolution, social justice and sustainable living. A change which, she believes, can be achieved through active citizenship, global co-operation, information exchange between caring people and organisations, and the kind of peaceful pressure which, in 1996, led to the International Court of Justice declaring the use of nuclear weapons unlawful.

----- She concludes:

----- 'I hope this book has given readers some inspiration as to how the might become involved in helping this peaceful planet evolve to its full potential. Despite years of abuse, it is still an amazing and beautiful creation. It deserves our best efforts. Enjoy it, love it, and save it'.

----- There she is wrong. It is not the planet which may die: it is us. It is ourselves we must love enough to cherish the miraculous web of life which radiates from the earth's core to the farthest limits of our universe.